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BY

FREDERIC FAIRCHILD SHERMAN

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THE MAZARIN BIBLE

The first book printed from movable type

AN ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPT

The Naples "Offices"

AN EMBROIDERED BINDING

Charles the First's copy of the Cambridge Bible

LELOIR'S "FEMME de QUALITE"

Bound in Levant morocco with doublure of brocade

A BINDING BY SAMUEL MEARNE

AN OLD INLAID BINDING

THE MAZARIN BIBLE

The first book printed from movable type

How brave these pages are where row on row

 The type in lines unbroken moves today,

 An army that has won the world away

From Ignorance without a single blow.

The host of God, its endless victories show

 How powerless are the hands of men to stay

 The march of Truth, advancing, not to slay

But save them who their peril do not know.

Here where they first were marshalled into line

And started forth beneath the flag Divine

 To fight the bloodless battles of the Lord

They triumph still as in that far off past,

 A mighty army that will yet outlast

 Long centuries the cannon and the sword !

AN ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPT

The Naples "Offices"

This priceless manuscript Cellini bound
In finest gold all marvellously wrought,
And carven like the jewel of his thought ;
Its vellum, Clovio a canvas found,
Fit for those visions which he framed around
With beauty and to bright perfection brought ;
But God's great book of wonder puts to naught
The art with which its workmanship is crowned.

Ours be the glory of the earth and skies—
That splendid volume which before us lies,
Each page illumined by the Master's hand ;
The words of life—its prose and poetry—
Are writ therein for everyone to see,—
The miracles of sky and sea and land !

AN EMBROIDERED BINDING

Charles the First's copy of the Cambridge Bible

Clothed in the crimson of an English king
And blazoned with rare broideries of gold,
Of silver and of colors that still hold
A splendor such as poets love to sing,—
The holy book Charles read,—this precious thing
Remains to show how in the days of old
God's word was treasured by the brave and bold
With whose renown earth's farthest corners ring.

The humblest soul to common labor bred
Comfort can find in every precious page
Of this great book magnificently bound ;
Here where we read where once a monarch read
His words who reigns forever, age to age,
The peace that passeth knowledge still is found !

LELOIR'S "FEMME de QUALITE"

Bound in Levant morocco with doublure of brocade

Thou book of beauty, on whose every leaf
Fair ladies pictured with the perfect art
Of Maurice Leloir, cheat the reader's heart
With graciousness that brings us all to grief,
Hast in thy covers, like the fairy sheaf
Of the young god, for each a honied dart
Of loveliness in which there is no smart
Other than love's sweet agony so brief.

Quiver of Cupid, lined with rich brocade,
Bound in the sapphire of the summer skies,
How fine the bands of figured golden lace
Upon thy casing delicately laid
That hides his arrows—women's wondrous eyes
Whose pleasant wounds transfix us with their grace!

A BINDING BY SAMUEL MEARNE

How fresh they spring from the morocco mold
Of this worn book, these flowers that Mearne massed
In great bouquets of beauty unsurpassed
With the sure knowledge of a gardener bold !
How bright they are, these blooms of burnished gold
Whose loveliness the centuries outlast—
And, ah, how fragrant of a time long past
They seem, these tulips in his garden old !

With what dumb eloquence they speak today
For him who laid them out to so display
The matchless labor of a thinking heart,—
The love of the dead gardener, he who wrought
This miracle with them, his only thought
To make them live forever by his art !

AN OLD INLAID BINDING

Unfaded still, the flowers on this book pressed
Hold fast the fragrance of the long ago,
The dear old-fashioned loveliness and glow
Of treasured things the hands of Love have blest.
What memories among these blossoms nest,—
What fancies flutter ever to and fro
As if they knew what now at last we know—
That he who bound this work loved Nature best !

Tulips and roses, yellow, pink and white,
He gathered from his gardens of delight
Giving to labor all the zest of joy.
An hundred years 'tis since he passed away,
And here we find them fresh and fair today—
A legacy that Time will not destroy !

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